

But, in the search for specific texts, we are impressed with the overwhelming indications of the high value set on motherly character and motherly service to the child, the home, and the nation. She is not urged and commanded to rise to her high calling, but it seems to be taken for granted that she will do so. And that the mothers of the Bible met this expectation is shown by abundant passages calling upon others to exalt and honor her. Thus in the example of her life, and the esteem to which her life entitled her, the mothers of our time may find most practical and valuable teaching.

The references in the Old Testament imply full recognition of the mother, not only as parent and as participant with the father in the care and rearing of the children, but they everywhere demand for her the love and honor due to her unparalleled devotion.

For the noblest women of their race, without regard to the character of the service that won for them distinction, the chosen people of God had no better name than "mother." With the name and fame of the great Law Giver and Leader of his people thru the wilderness, runs always the story of the mother who saved him for his great career thru days and nights of watching by that hidden cradle in the rushes of the Nile. For Deborah, to whose voice as prophet the leaders of armies listened; who went up with the host to battle because the captains of the hosts refused to go without her; who sat under her palm tree judging the children of Israel—they found no name so great as "Mother in Israel." Adam's name for the woman God had given him was: "The mother of all living."

For the aged wife of Abraham, the friend of God, what distinction like that of "Mother of Nations," and what sweeter testimony to her hold on the life of Isaac than we have in the simple story of the new love that came to him with Rebecca, which lifted from his heart the shadow from that gloomy cave in Hebron and comforted him after him after his mother's death."

One does not forget the glory and power of God or the honor of Elijah as shown in the healing of the son of the woman who had shared her cruise of oil, but we must remember, too, that here God thru his prophet shows his own tender sympathy with the mother heart. We find ourselves watching breathlessly while the flush creeps thru the pallor and the light of life comes into the dulled eyes, and the white lips quiver as the child's soul comes back to him. We see the look on the prophet's face as he lays the boy in his mother's arms, hear his voice, "See! thy son liveth," and hear her answer, as she takes him back, "Now I know that the word of the Lord is in thy mouth is truth." God's love comprehending the mother's anguish, and answering to the cry of the mother love, was the surest, swiftest way to win the answer of the mother-heart to the yearning

heart of God. The poet told it when he wrote:

"O Great Heart of God! whose loving
Cannot hindered be nor crossed,
Will not weary—will not even
In our death itself be lost.
Love of God! of such great loving
Only mothers know the cost,
Cost of love, that all grief sharing,
Gave itself to save the lost."

The greatness of the mother-love and its likeness to the love of God is revealed by David when his tender submission voices itself as in Psalm 131: "Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of its mother. My soul is a weaned child."

How high a value he placed on mourning for a mother is shown when he measures his goodness to his enemies in their affliction by saying (Psalms 35: 13, 14), "When they were sick my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting. I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother."

And the quick recognition of the kinship of the spirit of motherhood and the spirit of God is shown in the almost universal transference to our own lives as individuals, that utterance of the prophet concerning Jerusalem in the sixty-sixth chapter of Isaiah, when he says, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." So sorely has the individual heart needed this comfort that it has claimed and taken and rejoiced in it, regardless of the fact that the word was for Jerusalem, and we were asked to "rejoice and be glad with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her."

In Proverbs 23: 22, sons are urged to "despise not the mother when she is old," and all evil things are attributed to a generation that "doth not bless their mother," and the highest reward of a good woman is, as we see elsewhere, that "her children shall rise up and call her blessed."

Coming down to the New Testament we find abundant evidence of the appreciation and exaltation of motherhood. St. Paul recognizes it when, speaking of the unfeigned faith which he finds in Timothy, he reminds him that it "dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice." In another epistle he urges, "entreat the elder women as mothers."

All these examples and precepts which, in one way or another seek to stimulate the heart's honor and devotion for the mother, by their very loving loyalty influence the mother to be worthy of all by her own recognition of her high destiny and her profound responsibility to God.

Leaving this line of human illustration, there remains only to call attention to Christ's evident ideal of the rank of the mother in the kingdom he established. There are not many sentences, but they are pregnant with meaning. The obedience of His boyhood, the evident surprise that his mother's heart should not have known in-

tuively what was passing in his heart in Jerusalem when he asked, "Know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The gentle question surely might have been, "I thought of course, my mother would have understood." The tender committal of her to His beloved John at the last—these seem human, tender, personal. This was Mary's Son providing for His mother—a great example for every mother and every son.

But the broader message, "He that doeth the will of My Father, the same is My brother and sister and mother," was for His kingdom for all time, for all the world—opening the door for all manhood and womanhood to live for Him in divinest companionship of sisterhood and brotherhood. And for all motherhood He made a way to share the blessedness of Mary the mother of Jesus. She who, down thru all the ages, lives to do the will of His Father—she who trains her own children in the Christ life, she who mothered any one of the little ones of whom He said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these, ye have done it unto Me," she might enter, nay, even unto this day she does enter, into the promise given at the cross. Surely, if all other pages of the Bible were barren of a message to mothers, this last and sweetest is enough.

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Next door to the family of whom I spoke last week lies another despondent mother. Not only does her husband drink but his little boy is trying to walk hand in hand with him. Too young to patronize the saloon, he has learned the art of robbing the city lamp reservoirs. One of the boys tried to explain the process to me, but I can't quite understand. However, the boys gather around the lamp post and by means of a cloth they catch the fumes of the gasoline and then inhale it. The effect is similar to that of opium. In this demonized state he comes home to his mother whose state of health calls for the tenderest care and brightest surroundings. When I called on Saturday she said her Jimmie had gotten into trouble again, that he was under arrest for shooting pigeons in a vacant lot and would have to serve a few days in the Moyamensing prison. If she were only well enough she would intercede for him. Finally she saw that a few days in prison where he had time and surely occasion for thought, might be of more value to him, than the imprisonment would be disgraceful.

Like many other boys, and girls too, he thought working would be better than school. He soon discovered his mistake and now refuses to work, nor has he the courage to go back to school, and cares still less for church. The mother is so anxious that we try to get him interested in the mission. We started by getting his little sisters in the Sunday school. But he must first have his